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Introduction

CORPORATIONS HAVE spurred innovative advances that have served many of humanity's needs, but they have done so at a cost to our oceans, forests, wildlife, Indigenous communities, and ultimately to our very lives and health. The fossil fuel industry, for example, brought us mass mobility, the Industrial Revolution, and the energy to power our communications and lifestyles. It has also caused 350,000 premature deaths in the US each year, brought our planet to an existential crisis in the form of climate change, and empowered and enriched conservative political leaders who refuse to stop it.¹ The agricultural industry is another example. It feeds over 340 million Americans, but it is also a major cause of air pollution, accounting for 15,900 premature deaths in the US every year, 12,700 of which are connected to the production of animal-based foods.² These are just two of dozens of industries that have been and continue to be the targets of corporate campaigns aimed at reducing their environmental and health impacts.

There is a cultural war in America. There always has been, but the factions are more polarized than in previous decades. On one side are those who believe that a free and unfettered marketplace will provide jobs, wealth, and limited, but tolerable, social and environmental problems. They believe government taxes and regulations limit the growth of businesses and the benefits they provide to all who are willing to work. On the other side are those who believe a capitalistic marketplace is skewed toward concentrating wealth in the hands of as few people as possible. They believe that taxes and social and environmental

regulations are necessary to distribute wealth fairly among those who create it and to protect society and the earth from corporate abuse. Over time, the political pendulum swings back and forth between these two warring factions. Today, it has swung to the extreme, favoring those advocating an unfettered marketplace. This extreme is manifest in the reelection of Donald Trump and has huge implications for the immediate future of corporate campaigns.

With the rise in the popularity of conservative politicians, campaigns to make corporations more socially and environmentally responsible are more critical than ever. Radical free-market political conservatives and extractive industry corporations that are intent on weakening regulations saw the opening created by Trump's reelection and they seized on it. The current conservative administration is rolling back climate programs, accelerating fossil fuel production, and eviscerating the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Energy, and other federal agencies. At the time of this writing, the administration has taken steps to weaken and suppress opposition from civil society and the public. It is halting the enforcement of a key anti-money laundering law, rescinding climate and human capital disclosure rules for public companies, and reducing corporate enforcement actions.³ Achieving social and environmental progress through federal legislation will be virtually impossible for several years. We will need civil society activists to mobilize consumers to pressure corporations to make needed changes.

Why civil society? Because it is composed of thousands of organizations and millions of individuals dedicated to proactively making the world a more beautiful, ethical, and just place. Corporate campaigns are one of the most important avenues available to civil society activists to accomplish this. They expose the harmful practices of companies and their industries, propose solutions to reduce or eliminate them, and employ marketplace, legal, and legislative strategies to change those harmful practices.

This book is a practical guide for prospective and new corporate campaigners to use in the fight against the excesses of greed and power that are concentrated in the hands of major corporations. It lays out how to

plan and conduct campaigns to make corporations more socially and environmentally responsible, drawing upon wisdom from hundreds of corporate campaigns, large and small, conducted over the last fifty or more years in the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union, Australia, Canada, India, and elsewhere. Throughout this book there are also insights from corporate insiders whose companies were previous campaign targets. I thought it important to share these, so you would know how companies perceive activists. Their insights are all worth considering; however, they are not always worth following.

There are excellent books on conducting activist campaigns, but there are none exclusively on the conduct of *corporate campaigns*. They are different animals! Corporations have brands, products, customers, retail outlets, advertising, shareholders, boards of directors, executives who are hired and not elected, and more. They are driven by competition and profits. All of this makes them vulnerable to public pressure campaigns in ways that are sometimes similar to but often very different from the ways in which elected officials can be pressured.

Corporate campaigns, because of the various issues they address and the companies they target, take many forms, as noted in the preface. This book is the result of time I have spent getting to know both sides of the corporate campaign equation. This includes many years consulting with Fortune 500 companies on organizational change and learning their inner workings. It also draws upon my doctoral studies of interpersonal, organizational, and mass communications aimed at changing attitudes and behavior. Most of all, it is the result of the decision to follow my heart and leave the corporate world for the environmental activist world. That afforded me over thirty years of leading, coordinating, and designing corporate campaigns, and managing foundations' funding of them. In those thirty years, I was fortunate to work with and learn from passionate, brilliant, and bold activists who were willing to push the envelope of what was possible to achieve what seemed impossible. They taught me that there is no "I" in movements, only "We." For that reason, you will not see the word "I" referring to me anywhere in the subsequent chapters of this book. It is about how "we" have built, and continue to build, a stronger corporate campaign movement.

In the process of conducting numerous national and international environmental, social, and climate corporate campaigns, I came to realize that we are collectively engaged in a giant ongoing field experiment with theories and hypotheses about changing corporate behavior that we test by our campaigns. My role in several of the largest environmental corporate campaigns ever conducted afforded me a firsthand opportunity to see how well the academic theories of communications, and attitude and behavior change applied in the real world where it mattered. This book is the result. It brings together in one place the essential lessons learned from a wide array of corporate campaigns on a wide range of issues.

This book is imperfect, as any book on such a diverse, complex, and ever-evolving endeavor would be. I wrote it much like the campaigns I designed and directed—with the advice and guidance of campaign experts. I interviewed them and invited their input because in many cases they knew more than me about a particular aspect of campaigning. At the outset I acknowledge that this book is heavily influenced by my environmental campaign experiences based in the United States. But throughout the last thirty years, I have been a student of corporate campaigns in many issue arenas, in the United States and abroad. I founded the Business Ethics Network to bring advocates from labor, health, environment, climate, human rights, animal rights, and other fields together to learn from and collaborate with each other. My hope is that they, and our international colleagues who are not the focus of this book, will see this book as the genesis that inspires them to write their own books refining the theory and hypotheses advanced in this treatise for their field and countries.

In the end, building a better and more just world is all about building movements. That is, about building on each other's accomplishments and lessons learned. Standing on the shoulders of those who went before us. Corporations are not going away. If we can better control them, we can better control governments. If we can better control governments, future generations may have a chance of living in a beautiful, healthy, equitable, just, and biodiverse world.

This book is written for people and organizations that believe corporations should be more socially and environmentally responsible. Of

course, we can debate exactly what that means in terms of their practices. For me, it means that **corporations should do no harm**. They should not contribute to climate change. They should not pollute the environment. They should seek to provide equal opportunities for qualified workers regardless of their race, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity. They should treat all employees fairly and equitably in terms of their supervision, compensation, and advancement. They should never endanger the mental or physical health of human beings. In short, they should respect the rights of all people and communities affected by their business—including shareholders, employees, customers, Indigenous peoples—and preserve the environment.

This book is also for people working inside corporations. My hope is that business students and socially and environmentally responsible employees who want to change corporations for the better will find this book useful in making their case to decision-makers inside. The obvious application for them is helping their companies anticipate where they are vulnerable to being a corporate campaign target and taking steps to change those practices without being forced to do so. The less obvious application for them would be to act surreptitiously as a whistleblower to a corporate campaign organization that deals with the issues they witness and possibly advise them on how to proceed with their company for the best results.

I believe that the threat and devastating impact of climate change that looms over our society will ultimately force fossil fuel fanatics, their government sycophants, and their corporate accomplices to yield to the demands of reality. I believe that the racial diversification of America and its embrace by younger generations will make advocating or even tolerating discriminatory corporate practices unacceptable, whether those practices are by companies themselves or their overseas suppliers. I further believe that as investors realize the superior profitability of companies that adhere to rigorous environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards and own their broader stakeholder responsibility, they will demand more socially and environmentally progressive practices. However, these things will only come to pass in a timely manner if they are ushered in by activists who give our capitalist systems no

other option. For that, we urgently need corporate campaigners to be equipped with insight and strategies to succeed. There is a hero in all of us and my hope is that this book empowers the one inside of you.

This book begins with a preface that provides a brief history of the branches (e.g., labor, environment, health, discrimination, animal rights, etc.) of the corporate campaign movement. The book is then divided into informal parts. The first part explains why corporate campaigns are necessary to control companies' harmful practices. It provides a description of the different types of corporate campaigns, the various tracks that comprise them, and the typical stages that corporate campaigns go through. The second part is dedicated to the development of campaign strategy. It starts by describing how corporations are structured. It then provides guidance on how to research and select the corporate target and then use that research to "power map" the campaign strategy. This section further explains how to craft a compelling campaign story and how to conduct polling and/or focus groups to refine it.

The third part is about organizing the stakeholders to achieve change. This includes a chapter on recruiting and organizing ally organizations into a well-coordinated team. It includes mobilizing and organizing individual and institutional shareholders and employees. The fourth part is about executing the campaign. This is where the campaign becomes real. We explore field and online strategies and tactics that are such an important part of most campaigns. This section also describes defensive public relations and legal strategies that advocates need to be prepared to use.

The book's fifth part dives into the final stages of a campaign to educate campaigners on how to manage the negotiation process and how to arrive at solutions that institutionalize a company's commitment. The sixth part is about going forward. It combines the knowledge gained from the previous sections to guide campaigners through the process of building a persuasive fundraising case for individual donors and charitable foundations. It addresses the challenges and rewards for campaigners and organizations that choose to engage in corporate campaigns. It ends by trying to answer the question "What are future priorities for corporate campaigns, especially in a conservative political environment?"

Finally, as part of the process of researching this book, I conducted recorded interviews with directors of many of the seminal corporate campaigns of the last thirty years. Those interviews have been converted to podcasts and are accessible at the Corporate Campaign Resource Center website (corpcampaignscenter.org). There you'll also find other articles and tools that complement this book, as well as a place where you can provide suggestions for improving future editions.

Corporations play a hugely important role in our society. They have enormous influence over how we think, what we buy, who we vote for, and how we evolve as a society. Therefore, we must become more demanding of what we expect of them and more powerful in how we manage them to meet those expectations. Nonprofit advocacy groups must become more aggressive in demanding change and less naive about assuming that merely educating companies and government officials will achieve it. Only an outside pressure game AND an inside educational game together can accomplish the significant revolution required for our social growth and environmental survival. We need more corporate campaigns by more organizations employing more sophisticated methodologies and tools to change the fundamental rules that all corporations must follow. This book is my contribution to building that movement, with much credit due to those whom I've learned from.

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